their houses. Dishes, benches, cooking boxes, cradles, counterpoles, canoes, all were carved from this wood. The bark was woven into baskets, and when dyed formed the most common ceremonial decoration.

Even within the forty miles of the river valley formerly occupied by the Bella Coola there are considerable variations in climate. At the mouth of the river the typical Pacific coast type is found, without great extremes of temperature and with much rain, especially in winter time. During winter, the moisture is precipitated as snow a few hundred feet above the valley, and the limit of the snow can be traced on the mountain slopes, rising or falling a few feet from day to day. Further up the valley, the winters are colder and in many years snow lies for weeks on the ground, and in the upper part of the Bella Coola were the winters are severe, although much more moderate than on the upper regions immediately to the east.

When we learn the history of the inhabitants of this land? They believe that long, long ago, *Ałquntin*, the supreme god, caused four ancestors to be created in his house, *Nusmil'a*, in the land above, and sent them down to populate the Bella Coola valley. These four people came in groups of two or three, brothers and sisters, or occasionally one and wife, each group descending, in many cases in natural form, to a certain mountain and then making their home as in fact. They brought with them animals and fish, tools and houses, also the knowledge of ceremonial dances. In fact, they differed from the Bella Coola of the present past only in having greater supernatural power. These four people increased with extraordinary rapidity, until each group grew into a village, bound together by a knowledge of their four ancestors. In course of time the occupants of certain villages continued, as some increased more rapidly than others, but on the whole each settlement maintained its character of being the descendants of one group of the four ancestors of this world.

This mythological belief is a fair picture of Bella Coola life as it was when the first white man visited the valley. How-

[No Power of Abstraction]

of his relatives, has given them for this purpose. When he 575*
crouches during the chorus they crowd close around, almost 796*
concealing him. Particularly in those dances fraught with
danger to the performer, it is customary for any number of his 535
friends, either men or women, to dance to "help" him. Any-
one wishing to do so merely stands up and begins, in time to
the music, irrespective of what part of the house he may be in. [573]
It is considered contrary to good manners for a father or
help his son, or a brother a brother, but a dancer is pleased to [571]
have aid from anyone else. It is said that in Bella Bella
certain Initiates have definite prerogatives of helping in this
way, but this is not the case in Bella Coola. Throughout [535]
every dance the Initiate women were their dancing cap.

This, then, is the type of dance which the uninitiated in 575*
the Cannot house see. They hear the song, too, and pass with 796*
awe as X, imbued as he is with the supernatural power of sight.
Then the mounting boards are picked up and taken to the
next house, where the whole ceremonial is repeated. This is
done at each house of the village.* All the Initiates now assure
to X's house, where he once more dances to his song. A hun- [536]
dream is always used to help the singers in keeping time, and
when the song has been finished one man continues to use it
here is all day. X always arranges to have a relative or friend
superintend the distribution of food, which follows his final [574]
dancing. As the Initiates are using, the mounting deliver their
usual admonishments, a visit that accompanies every meal.
Then they call on the people to erect a raised platform between
the fire and the back wall of the house. Whereas here been
placed in readiness so that it is an easy matter to build a frame-
work a few feet in height, of which the flat top is screened by
a matting wall about three feet high. This is often decorated [534]
with designs of food value both without visual significance as
far as the Bella Coola of today are aware. X climbs to this
platform, the Initiates disperse, and only the incessant pounding
of the drum proves that some unusual event is taking place.

* In Bella Coola, but perhaps not in Kimsquit. [44]